

# ISU Extension & Outreach

Extension-Nonprofit Partnership Models for  
Creating Access to Capital and Addressing  
Beginning Farmer Barriers

**Connecting Veterans with Ag Production &  
Supply Chain Opportunities**

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## *ISU Community Vitality Center Mission:*

**Create Policy Dialogue & Demonstration  
Projects Involving Actionable Strategies for  
Rural Economic Development**

### **1. Gaps: Access to Opportunity & Capital**

- People, Capital, Expertise, & Experience

### **2. Pathways & Institutional Innovation**

- Invitation & Awareness

### **3. Track Records & Collaboration Experiments**

- Incentives

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## Connecting AgVets Collaboration

1. **Veterans in Agriculture** (Nonprofit agricultural veterans network)
  - 100 annual contacts from Veterans (50-50 Iowa & U.S)
  - Network of 300 stakeholders & USDA FSA Beginning Farmer Program Experience
2. **Extension Beginning Farmer Center**
  - Since 150 AgLink connections made, 740 young farmers, 34 retiring farmers
  - Annual Commercial Ag Beginning Farmer Workshops
3. **Extension Farm, Food & Enterprise Development**
  - Local Foods, Niche Markets, and Local Food Networks
  - Partners with Practical Farmers of Iowa
4. **Iowa Microloan** (Nonprofit grant & loan administration intermediary)
  - 140 Loan Clients, 400 Solidarity Clients, & Technical Assistance since 2009
5. **Ag Ventures Alliance Coop** (early stage AgriFood Tech fund)
  - Young Farmer Research Network (onfarm demo for equity)
  - Countryside Angel Investor Network

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## Model 1: Local Food & Niche Market

1. Veterans in Agriculture
  2. Extension Farm, Food & Enterprise Development
  3. Practical Farmers of Iowa
- Paid On-Farm Apprenticeship
  - Classroom Coursework & Workshops
  - Ag Finance, FSA Beginning Farmer Programs
  - Lean Niche Market Development

## Model 2: Commercial Production Agriculture

1. Extension Beginning Farmer Center
  2. Extension Area Farm Management Specialists
  3. AgLink & Commercial Farmer Network
- Whole Farm and Enterprise Planning Workshops
  - Marketing, Leasing, & Succession Planning Workshops
  - Ag Link, Ag Finance, FSA Beginning Farmer Programs
  - Networking Events perhaps via Zoom

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## Model 3: Value-Added Supply Chain Opportunities

1. Iowa Foundation for Microenterprise (Iowa Microloan)
  2. Ag Ventures Alliance Coop (early stage equity fund)
  3. Extension Beginning Farmer Center
- Zoom Networking featuring AgriFood Tech Innovations
  - Young Farmer Research Testing Network
  - Countryside Angels Networking

## Ag Entry Pathways

### Assessment:

- Family & Business Goals
- Initial Endowments (skills & capital)

### What Opportunities & Focus:

- Ag Production (Farming & Ranching)
- Local Food Niche Markets
- Value-Added Supply Chain Innovations

# Ag Entry Tradeoffs

- Commodity Production is not the 60s
  - Economies of Size vs Labor Intensity
- Startup Team vs Family Operation
- Diversification & Ability to Pivot
- Vertical Multi-level Systemic Integration
- Commodity Ag vs. Value-Added
- Market Access, Proximity, Scalability?



# Why Target Veterans & Others?

- 46% military personnel from rural America
- 36% interested in apprenticeships (HBI18)
- 27% interested in entrepreneurship (HBI18)
- 8% of Iowa's farmers are veterans
- 1/3 Iowa Farmland owners over age 75
- 2% Iowa Farmland owners under age 35
- 22% Iowa farmers <10 years farming

## Who will farm in the Future?

- Veterans in Agriculture  
<https://veteransinagriculture.org/>
- ISUEO Beginning Farmer Center  
<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/bfc/>
- ISUEO Farm, Food, & Enterprise Dev.  
<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/ffed/>
- Iowa Microloan  
<https://www.iowamicroloan.org/>
- Ag Ventures Alliance Coop  
<https://www.agventuresalliance.com/>